A

Pastoral Letter

Of the Lord CARDINAL

Le CAMUS,

BISHOP and PRINCE

OF

GRENOBLE

To the CURATS of his DIOCESS;

Touching the METHODS

they ought to take, and in what Manner they should behave Themselves towards Their NEW CONVERTS.

Faithfully Translated from the Original in French.

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ALthough I have already declar'd in Our last Synod, the Means you ought to Uſe; and in what Manner you ſhould treat the *New Converts* of my Dioceſs: Nevertheleſs I have thought good to ſignify more particularly to you here, the principal Things which will require your beſt Attention and moſt ſerious Application.

I. *LEt it be one part of your Duties, to Explicate every* Sunday *the* Goſpel, *or the* Epiſtle *of the Day; having firſt read it diſtinctly in* French, *out of the time of Service: And that you may be the more able to Inſtruct them to their Advantage, apply your ſelves earneſtly to the Study of the Holy Scriptures, making uſe of ſome good* Commentary, *that will Explicate the Text to you; both in the Literal and the Moral Senſe.*

II. *Make it your Buſineſs on* Sundays *and* Holy-Days *to Catechize your Pariſhoners by* Queſtion *and* Anſwer; *Obliging your* New-Converts *to bring their Children and Servants: And omit not to ſay Prayers in* French, *both Morning and at Night on* Sundays *and* Holy-Days.

III. *Have a Care you do not leſſen, by a miſtaken Condeſcention, the Holy Doctrine of the* Church, *or diſguiſe the Truths which She propoſes to our Belief, under the ſpecious pretext of making the way Eaſier for the* New-Converts *to enter into our Communion: On the other ſide, it muſt be your equal Care to Teach them Nothing, but thoſe Undoubted Truths which are of Faith, and which the Holy Church hath deſided in the Council of* Trent: *You are likewiſe to take heed, that you do not*

Mix or Confound the School Opinions, with the real Doctrine of the Church.

IV. *Endeavour to Undeceive them of the many false Opinions and the Prejudices they are poſſeſs'd with againſt the* Roman Catholick Church; *by making them Senſible, that We give to God only the Supream Honour, of a True and Real Adoration; and that We place all our Truſt and Hopes ſolely in the Merits of Jeſus Chriſt, and not in any Pictures or Reliques of Saints; and that it is no part of our Faith, to believe there is any Inherent Virtue, or particular Bleſſing annex'd to thoſe Pictures or Reliques.*

V. *Suffer not any one to Preach Up, or Maintain in your Pariſhes, any Fabulous or Groundleſs* Miracles; *or that they ſpeak of* Indulgences *in any other Senſe, than the Council of* Trent *hath declar'd them: Let nothing be Preach'd by your ſelves, or others, but the Solid and Subſtantial Truths of the Goſpel, in its Natural and Original Purity; Expreſſing it ſtill with all the Clearneſs, the ſubject-matter can poſſibly allow.*

VI. *Endeavour as much as in you lyes, that every* New-Convert *perform his Duty as a good* Catholick *ought to do: But be ſure you avoid all manner of Violence or Compulſion to them, ſince God admits to his Service only the free and voluntary Acts of a willing Mind: Wherefore you muſt be very Careful you uſe no Threats or* Sharp *Expreſſions in your Sermons or Diſcourſes to them; when you Exhort them to frequent your Churches, or Receive the Sacraments.*

VII. *Incline them all you can to aſſiſt daily at the Holy Sacrifice of the* Maſs, *but leave no Spies or Inſpectors*

at the Church doors, to inform againſt thoſe that come not: And make not too ſevere and rigorous a Diſtinction, betwixt thoſe that have done their Duty, and thoſe that have omitted it.

VIII. *You are never to Adminiſter the Sacraments to them, till you are ſatisfied in your Conſcience, that they are well diſpos'd to receive them; which can never be, till they have declar'd to you, that they do firmly believe all that the Holy* Catholick, Apoſtolick, *and* Roman Church *Believes; and that they will Live and Dye in the Communion of it: Therefore let no Humane Conſideration induce you to give them the Sacraments, till you find in them all the Diſpoſitions requiſite to receive them Worthily.*

IX. *You muſt be very Cautious and Prudent in the manner of Examining your Penitents, concerning the Sin of Impurity; Principally in the Confeſſions of Women, to whom you muſt take Care to ſpeak with ſo much Modeſty, that you may give them no occaſion to believe, that Senſuality or Curioſity, hath any ſhare in the Queſtions you ask them.*

X. *You may at firſt abate your* New-Converts *ſomething of the Severity of thoſe* Pennances, *which otherwiſe their Sins might deſerve, leaſt too rigorous a Behaviour towards them, ſhould make them ſtumble at the Threſhhold, and ſo Fright them out of the Way of their Salvation.*

XI. *Uſe no ſort of Means to any one, either in Sickneſs or in Health, to compel them to the Sacraments againſt their Wills: Neither Threaten or Inform againſt any body on this occaſion: Avoid likewiſe as much as you*

can,

can, the giving notice of them to those, who are appointed to Judge and Punish them for their Failures on the score of Religion; But rest your self satisfied, in that you have done your Duty, in Exhorting them to Theirs, in the presence of their Neighbours; Make them sensible of the great Advantages they will reap by so doing; engage their Relations and Friends to persuade them not to go out of this World, without the Comfortable Help of the Holy Viaticum.

XII. *In case any one Dye, having refus'd to receive the Blessed Sacrament, let him not be Interr'd in Holy Ground, nor make any publick Prayers for him after his Death. Concern not your selves in what manner they use the Corps, or where they Bury it, leave That to the Kings Officers, whose Business it is to take Care of it; Thrust not your selves into those Matters, or into any thing else that may Alienate them from you, and so put you out of a Capacity, of doing their Souls that Service your Function obliges you unto.*

XIII. *When they fail in sending their Children to School or Catechism; or when they Eat Meat upon prohibited Days, tell them of it Charitably, but Privately, as a good Pastor ought to do: And if by your Christian Care and good Advice they mend not their Faults, do not therefore bring them publickly into Trouble, or speak with Contempt or Aversion of them to their Neighbours, but content your self, in giving us an account of those that have not Comply'd with their Duties, that we may in due time apply such Remedies to them, as Charity shall suggest, or the* Holy Ghost *shall inspire Us.*

XIV. *Pray to God Almighty, both in Private and in Publick for their true and sincere Conversion; Edify them*

them by your good Examples, and by your Holy, Chaſte, Charitable, and Diſ-intereſted way of Living; Feed them continually with the wholeſom Food of the Word of God; Oblige them with a Chriſtian and Brotherly Affection in all things, that they ſhall deſire, and You can do for them, either in Relation to their Spiritual or Temporal good.

This is the beſt way of Confirming them in our Communion, for as St. Auguſtin *ſays,* Nothing contributes more to the knowledge of a True Church, than a real practice of the Truths; *The* Evangeliſt *teaches us,* Ejus eſt Evangelium, ubi vivitur ſecundum Evangelium.

XV. *Put in practice the Advice the Prince of the Apoſtles gives to all Paſtors, which we may call the firſt Rule of* Chriſtianiſm, Feed the Flock of God committed to your Care, watching over them; not by a forc'd Neceſſity, but by an Affection truly Voluntary: Not by a ſhameful deſire of Gain, but by a Diſ-intereſted Charity: *And as St.* Paul *ſays,* Receive and Uſe with Charity, him that is yet weak in Faith, without running violently into Conteſts and Diſputations with him, 1 *Peter, Rom.* 14.

XVI. *Endeavour to follow the Way that St.* Auguſtin *preſcrib'd to a Biſhop of* Carthage, *which was to Act in ſuch like Circumſtances, without Heat, Threats, or Sharpneſs; and to perſuade them in your Exhortations, to fear more the Judgments of God, than the Power of Men*: Non aſperè quantum exiſtimo, non duriter, non modo imperioſo iſta Tollantur; ſed magis docendo quam jubendo; magis monendo quam minando; nè nos ipſi in noſtra poteſtatè, & non Deus in ſuo Sermone timeatur, *St.* Aug. *Epiſt. ad* Aurel. Carth.

Re-

Remember that the Diſeaſes of the Soul, are not to be Cured in a little time; and when they are, it is never done by Conſtraint and Violence, but by the Fervour of Prayers, and by a ſoft and gentle inſinuation of Truth, mix'd with Charity; So that to gain their good Opinion of you, and to induce them to Love the Holy Catholick Church; *tell them what St.* Auguſtin *told the* Manicheans, *to oblige them kindly to return to their Mother Church:* Let thoſe *(ſays he)* treat you with Rigour, that know not how hard a thing it is, to find out Truth, and to avoid Errour: Let thoſe uſe you with Rigour, that know not how hard it is to overcome the prejudice of an Unhappy Education, and the wild *Chimera's* of a Mind pre-poſſeſs'd with Errour: Let thoſe treat you with Rigour, that know not how hard it is, to clear the Eye of the Interiour Man, and make him capable of Diſcerning Truth, which is the Sun of the Soul: But let us not uſe at that rate thoſe that are ſeperated from us, not by any Errours they have invented themſelves, but by thoſe of their Fore-fathers: We therefore offer up our daily Prayers to Almighty God, that being throughly convinc'd of the falſe Opinions, your Ignorance rather then Malice engag'd you in, he will be graciouſly pleas'd to Inſpire you with the Spirit of Peace, which will admit of no other impreſſions, than thoſe of *Charity*; of no other Intereſt, than that of *Jeſus Chriſt*, and of no other deſires than thoſe of your Salvation, *St.* Aug. *contr. Epiſt. fundum cha.* 2.

Sir,

I am ever,

Your moſt Affectionate,

The Cardinal le *CAMUS.*

At *Grenoble* the 28 *April* 1687.